

Today's News - Monday, December 6, 2010

- ArcSpace brings us UNStudio Tower in Amsterdam (moiré façade included).
- China's skyscraper boom is "an economic lifeline for the elite club of skyscraper builders" (some staggering statistics included).
- With the 2014 World Cup and 2016 Olympics heading its way, Rio swings into full gear to improve life in the favelas (not all are convinced, architects included).
- Moore on Robin Hood Gardens: it may have "seen better days, but you should see the monstrosities they want to replace it with" (Honk Kong minus the vibrant street life, anyone?).
- Southwest D.C. continues its love affair with Bing Thom, who's now taking on the task of transforming an abandoned school into "an ambitious gallery and mixed use development" (for the Rubell foundation, no less).
- Saffron cheers Philly's ambitious Green2015 plan to "establish an archipelago of green oases on scraps of land" that "intentionally relies on a shop-your-closet philosophy" (a smart strategy when a city doesn't have money).
- The Crossrail project "about to start burrowing beneath London" is "the connectivity of a modernist's dream" (with hopes that "the millions in the streets above are not left to rue our need for speed").
- San Jose's soaring plans for high speed rail track crossing the heart of downtown "has attracted the most controversy and sparked fears of a permanent eyesore" (from video, looks like there might be "design" involved).
- It's a Foster kind of day: Pearman on Bucky's surprising influence on Masdar City's transport system + Rumors are F+P could be taking the same lessons to Cupertino, CA, for Apple + Who knows what he might have in store for Bloomberg HQ in London, "likely to depart markedly from the existing consent for four glass buildings."
- An eyeful of "Fractured Landscapes," the winning design for Atlantic City Holocaust Memorial competition by two Columbia U. students.
- Filipino architects kick off newly-chartered United Architects of the Philippines Qatar Chapter (UAPQaC) celebrating National Architecture Week.

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UNStudio: UNStudio Tower, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

China's skyscraper boom buoys global industry: It's an economic lifeline for the elite club of skyscraper builders...by 2012...45 of the tallest will be in Asia, with 34 of those in China alone...The boom has drawn a Who's Who of star architects and given Chinese firms their first shot at designing a skyscraper. -- Gensler; Thornton Tomasetti; Kohn Pedersen Fox (KPF); Skidmore Owings & Merrill (SOM); A+E Design- Associated Press/AP

Rio de Janeiro favelas to get facelift as Brazil invests billions in redesign: Architects grapple with the problem of integrating the shanty towns into the city...authorities are...implementing "pioneering" pacification schemes...as part of an urbanisation initiative called Morar Carioca (roughly "Rio Living"). The selection process...will see 40 architecture practices tasked with redesigning 582 inner-city slums... -- Luiz Carlos Toledo; Sergio Magalhães/IAB; Oscar Niemeyer [links]- Guardian (UK)

The estate we're in: don't knock it... down: Robin Hood Gardens in east London has seen better days, but you should see the monstrosities they want to replace it with...Both schemes are generic developers' fare...There is no sense of place, no distinctiveness...One proposal...is pure Hong Kong, minus the vibrant street life or dramatic topography...The other bid...is only slightly less crude. By Rowan Moore -- Peter and Alison Smithson (1972)- Observer (UK)

D.C.'s Southwest Revival by Art: Vancouver's Bing Thom designs a mixed-use project atop a repurposed school in a once blighted neighborhood...Southwest D.C. is on an upswing and Don and Mera Rubell of Miami's Rubell Family Collection foundation have commissioned Thom to design an ambitious gallery and mixed use development... [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

City plans proliferation of small parks: ...ambitious Green2015 plan...would establish an archipelago of green oases on scraps of land, some as small as a quarter acre...intentionally relies on a shop-your-closet philosophy because Philadelphia has so little money to invest in public amenities. By Inga Saffron -- Harris Steinberg/PennPraxis- Philadelphia Inquirer

Getting there: With the long-awaited Crossrail about to start burrowing beneath London, the most unconventional thing about this public project is the way private developers have been needed to make it happen...It's the connectivity of a modernist's dream...Whether design quality will suffer the scourge of value engineering...remains to be seen...One hopes that when all's said and done...the millions in the streets above are not left to rue our need for speed. -- Foster + Partners; Weston Williamson; Hawkins\ Brown; Stanton Williams; AHMM; McAslan; PLP; Aedas; BDP; Gillespies [images]- RIBA (UK)

Discussions on downtown high speed rail track begins: ...the image of an ugly aerial track comes to mind...would only run about three miles. But because it crosses the heart of downtown, that section - more than any other part of the 20-mile high speed rail corridor in San Jose - has attracted the most controversy and sparked fears of a permanent eyesore. [video]- Mercury News (California)

Fuller's earth: Foster + Partners' zero-carbon city of Masdar is moving along faster than you might think, and one rather racy aspect of it is a Dymaxion-inspired transport system. By Hugh Pearman -- David Nelson; 2getthere [images]- RIBA Journal (UK)

Norman Foster to design eco-friendly Apple campus: ...a 98-acre plot [in Cupertino, CA]...has apparently been modeled after Masdar in Abu Dhabi...The ludicrously ambitious plans extend to a network of underground tunnels to link the two campuses together, so employees can move between buildings without cars. [links]- Wired

Bloomberg inks deal for London headquarters: Foster & Partners has been lined up to design the scheme, which is likely to depart markedly from the existing consent for four glass buildings. The original plans were designed by architects Jean Nouvel and Lord Foster and included a 22-storey tower.- Financial Times (UK)

"Fractured Landscapes" selected as Atlantic City Holocaust Memorial design: ...depicts a broken stretch of Boardwalk - ruptured and fragmented by an unseen force...bringing an end to a yearlong architectural competition that featured more than 700 submissions from 55 countries. -- Patrick Lausell and Paola Marquez [images]- Press of Atlantic City (New Jersey)

Filipino architects start week of celebrations: The recently-chartered United Architects of the Philippines Qatar Chapter (UAPQaC) launched their celebration of National Architecture Week...centres on the theme 'Pop Arch: Reinventing Architecture for the Next Generation.'- The Peninsula (Doha, Qatar)

Best Architecture Books of 2010: Ten books pointing the way to larger professional horizons. By Norman Weinstein -- Eric J. Cesal; Thomas Fisher; Mark Garcia; Philip Jodidio; Charles Jencks/Edwin Heathcote; Giovanni Curatola; George Ranalli; James P. Cramer/Jane Paradise Wolford; etc. - ArchNewsNow

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